

An Essay  
on "Constipation"  
Respectfully Submitted  
to the  
Faculty of the Homeopathic  
Medical College of  
Pennsylvania  
by  
Jos H Gallagher  
of Pennsylvania

Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> 1853.

# Constitution

The Constitution  
is a gently occurring disease, but just when  
the Constitution at the road of the physician  
there is a fit made to come you have to  
see it owing to the very subject system of  
the School practice for there is no doubt that  
in a majority of cases of Constitution, the physician  
uses some of our powerful laxative, which has  
the desired effect of opening the bowels and so  
both patient and physician are satisfied, but the  
patient may actually be worse off than before.  
And the fact of many of the diseases of civilization  
unbelieved in Homoeopathy, to attain a standard  
of the efficacy of Homoeopathy a gall in the da-  
kile, induced me to select it as the subject of my  
lectures, not with the expectation of a large number  
of lame, but, and it is an affection generally  
met by the physician for it "lately called" their  
visit, gain of it. Many of them, he's done without  
to myself. The good Constitution is derived from  
the Liver, especially from Cardiostore, propria-

# "Constipation"

This formidable and frequently occurring disease, has perhaps received less investigation at the hands of the Physician, than many of much less consequence, which I suppose is owing to the very imperfect system of Old School practice, for there is no doubt, that in a majority of cases of constipation, they administer some of their powerful laxatives, which have the desired effect of opening the bowels and so both patient and physician are satisfied, but the patient may actually be worse off than before. And the fact of many of the believers, as well as, the unbelievers in Homoeopathy, entertain some doubts of the efficacy of Homoeopathic agents in this disease, induce me to select it as the subject of my Thesis, not with the expectation of adding anything to Science, but, as it is an affection frequently met by the Physician in his "daily walks" the investigation of it may, I trust, be of some importance to myself. The word Constipation is derived from the Latin, Constipatio, from constipare, (con and

elbow) to examine. And, notwithstanding the fact  
in which the excretions do not take place as usual  
but usually, it are moderately hard and are expe-  
lled with difficulty. A very well known fact is the  
absence of any of the habitual excretive products  
of the excretions of the animal among the sub-  
jects of the disease. The following is a list of the  
local inflammations. The supraselium situated  
between being in a sudden paralytic of the head  
giving; and the subnasum and posterior part of  
the alar of the nasal process and  
giving, first break, hemimelias, chronic head-  
ache, cutaneous affection and, in fact, a vast  
number of diseases, which though they may not  
have directly given the disease, yet may give  
it a place and wide influence. The first  
mentioning it being, upon the prevalence  
of this affection, it places in due proportion  
more frequent and terrible will be  
the bowel of the gut in several of the diseases  
especially those called by physicians prevalent

Slipare) to cram close. And denotes a state of the bowels in which the evacuations do not take place as frequently as usual, or are inordinately hard and are expelled with difficulty. It is a well known fact that the retention of any of the habitual excretions produces derangement of the animal economy. The suppression of the cutaneous exhalations is followed by local inflammation. The suppression and retention of urine bring on a sudden paralysis of the nervous system; and the suppression and retention of the contents of the alimentary canal produce indigestion, foul breath, hemorrhoids, chronic headache, cutaneous affections, and, in fact, a vast number of diseases, which though they may not arise directly from this source, yet, may be traceable to its remote and gradual influence. Without dwelling at large upon the various causes of this affection, I shall endeavor to give the more frequent and probable ones. Constipation of the bowels is frequent in persons of sedentary habit, especially those called by profession to constant

Mental occupations, while bodily activity and the  
 abundant reception of food protect the cultivation  
 of the bowels. The most common cause of this dis-  
 ease, therefore, seems to be an inactivity of the  
 bowels, from want of exercise and want of suffi-  
 cient stimulus from food. Weakness of the bowels,  
 a want of sufficient venous secretion, and above  
 all a want of sufficient quantity of healthy bile,  
 are also common causes. The bile is said to be the  
 natural purgative, contingently its deficiency  
 will leave the intestines in a torpid condition,  
 and just such a paucity of excretion has rendered  
 the far of that in many cases of constipation  
 indigestion. The liver is found unusually small  
 in atmosphere also before asperous in this affection,  
 and we find, therefore, that the inactivity of  
 the common parts of the animal system are here  
 ascribed to it. In the damp climates of  
 England and Holland, the use of unwholesome  
 articles of food is a frequent cause of constipation.  
 For I am fond of two kinds of bubbles, brimming

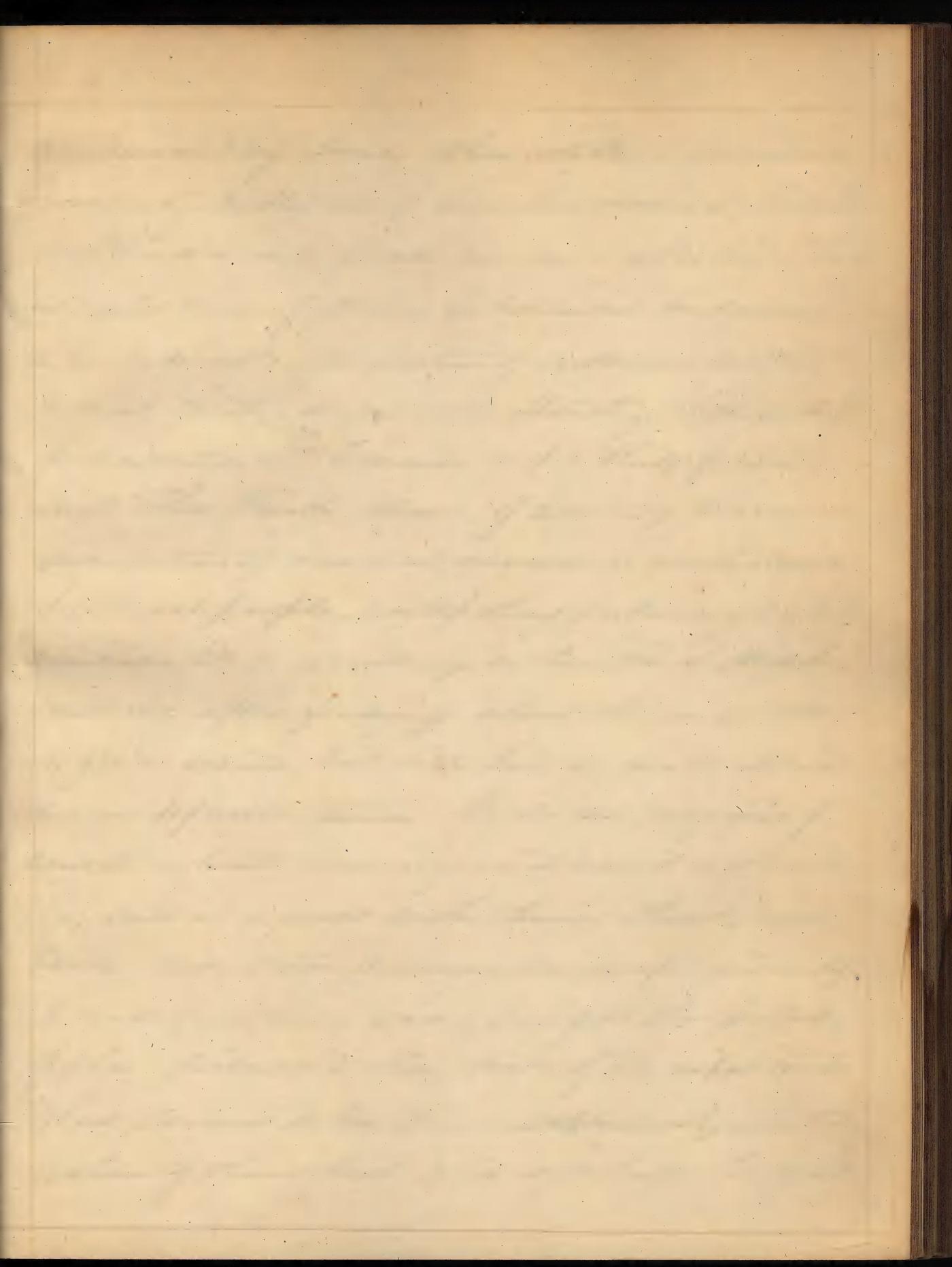
mental occupation; while bodily activity and a correspondent incision of food protect the cultivator of the soil. The most common cause of this evil would, therefore, seem to be an inert state of the bowels, from want of exercise and want of sufficient stimulus from food. Weakness of the bowels, a want of sufficient mucus secretion, and, above all a want of sufficient quantity of healthy bile, are also common causes. The bile is said to be the natural purgative, consequently its deficiency will leave the intestines in a torpid condition, and post-mortem examinations have revealed the fact, that in many cases of <sup>intestinal</sup> constipation the liver is found unusually small. Dry atmosphere also predisposes to this affection, and we find, therefore, that the inhabitants of the eastern parts of the United States are more disposed to it than the damper climate of England and Holland. The use of improper articles of food is a frequent cause of constipation. Food is composed of two kinds of substances, possessing

different properties; one soluble and nutritious and the other insoluble and non-nutritive. The former is taken up in a great measure, by the shortest vessels and conveyed into the blood. The latter, the non-nutritive remains in the intestines, stimulates their action, and is subsequently expelled. The pathological state noticed in this affection has been beautifully delineated by Prof. Small from the more complicated description given by Dr. H. King and A. Trotter, it is as follows:— 1. The presence of foreign bodies obstructing the intestinal canal. 2. Structural lesions of the intestines, which may diminish its calibre, or furnish to the mucus, contexts in which they may temporarily impede, strangle, or injure the intestine. 3. Absence of any mucous medium adapting contracted intestines, or when the peristole is impeded, a passage of the alimentary substance when the latter are sufficiently drawn together to impede a passage. 4. Excessive contractility of certain portions of the intestinal tube.

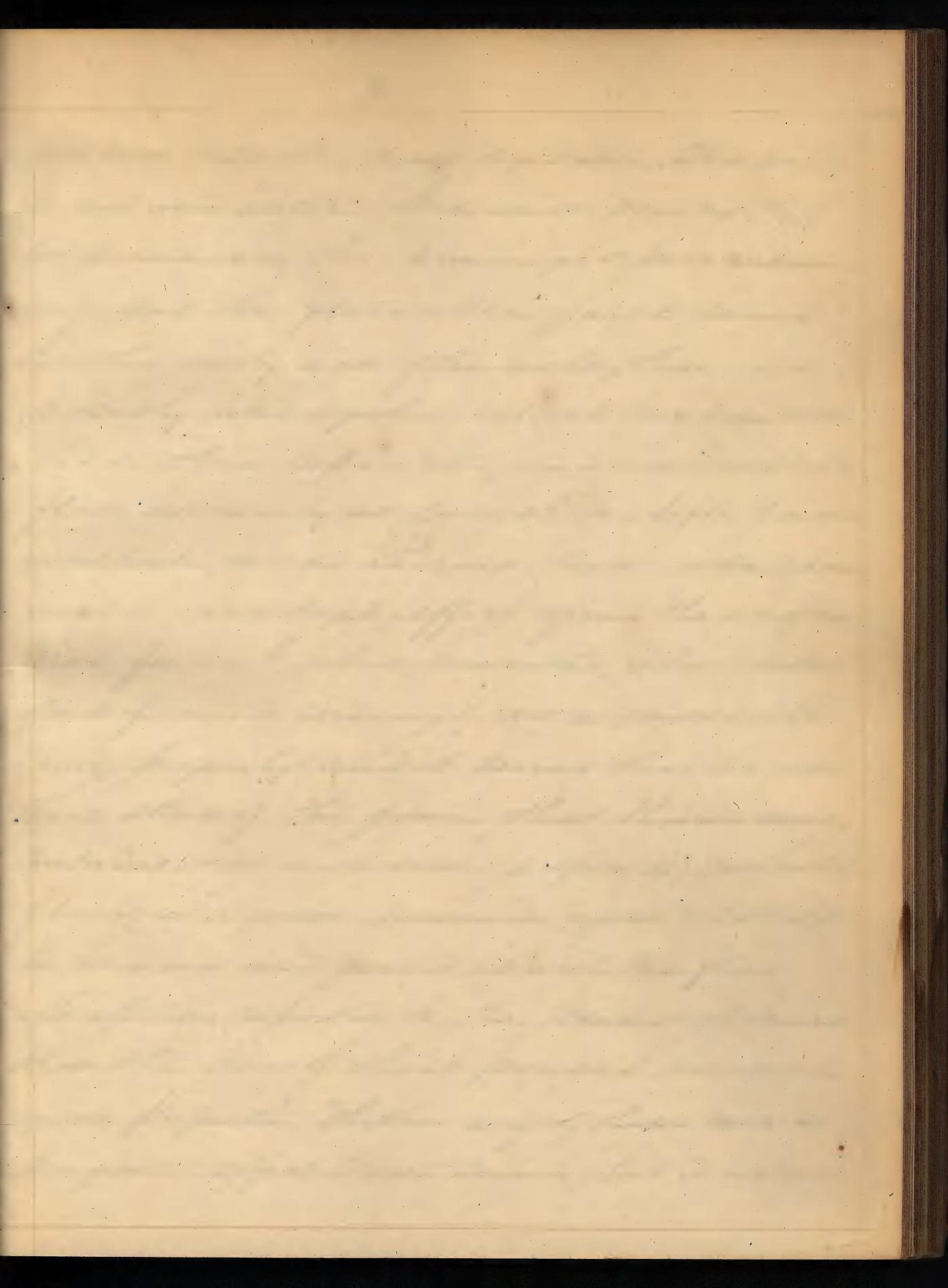
different properties; one soluble and nutritious and the other insoluble and non-nutritious." The former is taken up in a great measure, by the absorbent vessels and conveyed into the blood. The latter, the non-nutritious remains in the intestines, stimulates their action, and is subsequently expelled. The pathological state involved in this affection has been scientifically attenuated by Dr. Small from the more complicated description given by Dr. Harting and Streeton, it is as follows: - 1. The presence of foreign bodies obstructing the intestinal canal. 2. Structural lesions of the intestines, which may diminish its calibre, or furnish to the matter, cavities in which they may tarry. 3. Compression, strangulation, invagination of the intestine. 4. Absence of any ~~sterical~~ residue after long continued diarrhea, or when the pyloric orifice refuses a passage to the alimentary substances, when the latter are insufficient, when they are entirely assimilated. 5. Excessive contractility of certain portions of the intestinal tube.

6. Malakoff, or the movement of amorphous, which  
almost considerable distinction, and a long time  
cases of gouty gout. 7. An alteration of the conduct  
of uric acid, and of bacteria from some  
the surface of the intestinal tube, so that  
it may be beyond my limited sphere of know-  
ledge to enter into a detail of the preparation  
and application of centrifugation, the late date  
of that portion of the subject with which  
one more myself most familiar, the  
various forms of bacteria &c, about it append  
the first important step is to take a large  
quantity of the stool, and to the use of  
inspiratory, and with a spiral motion and  
the physician who is able to bring out the following  
who is practised in the office, the advice  
of but he should use and direct, and to  
assign such for his advice, it  
may be well to dwell upon this portion of the  
subject. The flour is a very common  
food, and, this in its varied proportions will

6. Weakness in the movements of contraction, which allows considerable distension, and accompanies cases of Paralysis. 7. An alteration of the products of exhalation, and of secretion, spreading on the surface of the intestinal tube. It being altogether beyond my limited sphere of knowledge to enter into a detail of the various results and complications of Constipation, I shall take up that portion of the subject with which I have made myself most familiar, such as the means of prevention &c. Now it appears that the first important step to be taken for the prevention of constipation, should be the use of proper food, and, as it is of vital importance to the physician to be able to point out to his patient, who is predisposed to this affection, the articles of diet he should use and discard, and to assign scientific reasons for his advice; it may be well to dwell upon this portion of the subject. Fine flour is a very common article of food, and, this in its varied preparations unless

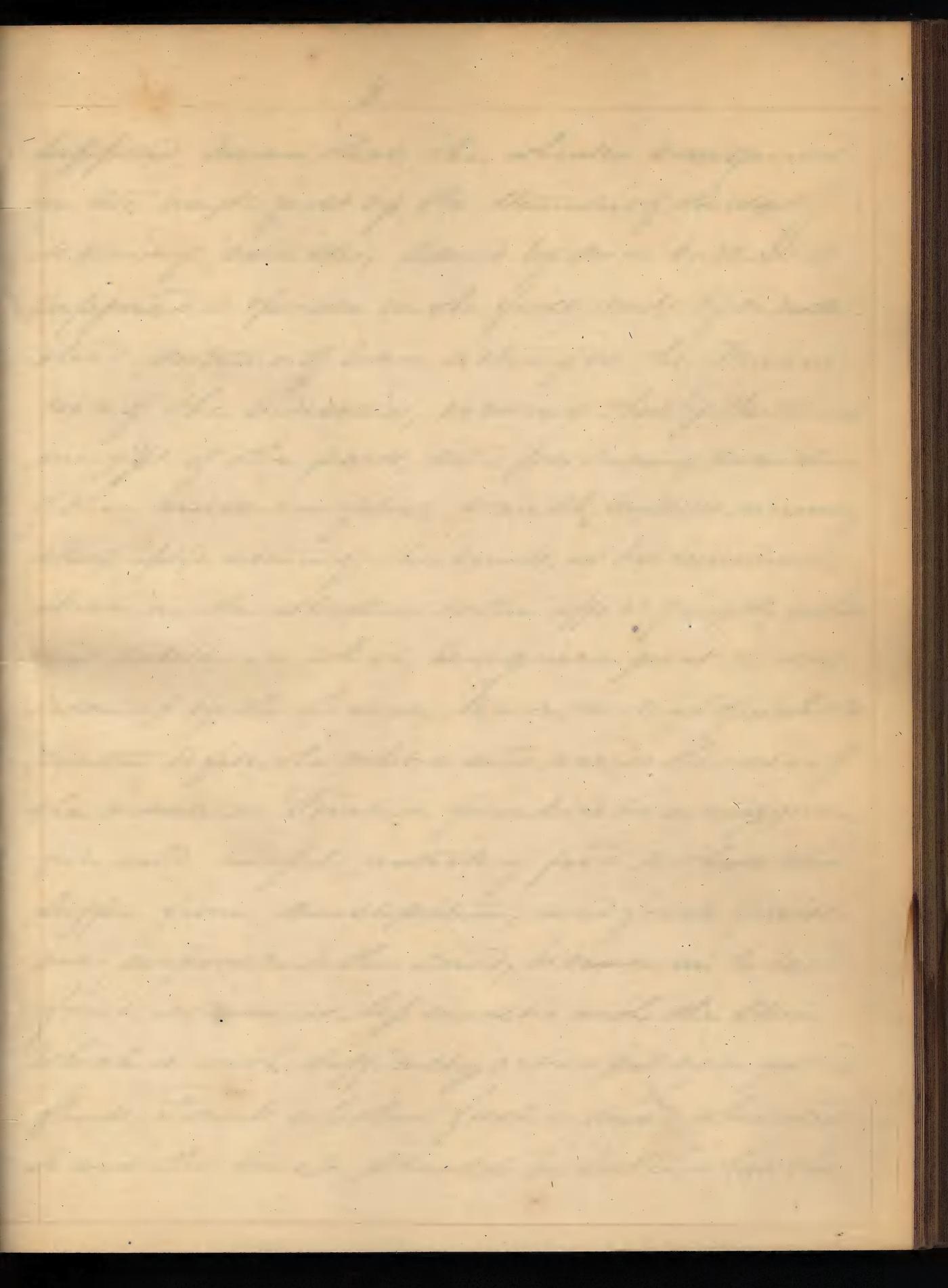


contracted by some other article, is an indirect cause of constipation, and the reason is, that its particles are in a great measure absorbed. The same is true of other substances containing a considerable proportion of nutritious matter, such as, jelly, arrow-root, starch, milk and its preparations. Dr. Truman, in his "Rules for Diet," says "The French plan of eating of enormous quantities of bread at dinner is unwholesome for most people, unless they take very violent exercise. Do g., according to the French physiologist, die after feeding about three weeks on fine bread, but will live on coarse bread an indefinite time. Birds are very fond of cracked wheat however and eat it with avidity; and it agrees with them. Wheat, rye, barley, oats, and maize are employed in different countries, according to the properties of the soil and the taste of the inhabitants. Wheat seems to be more extensively used than either of the others, and is perhaps the most

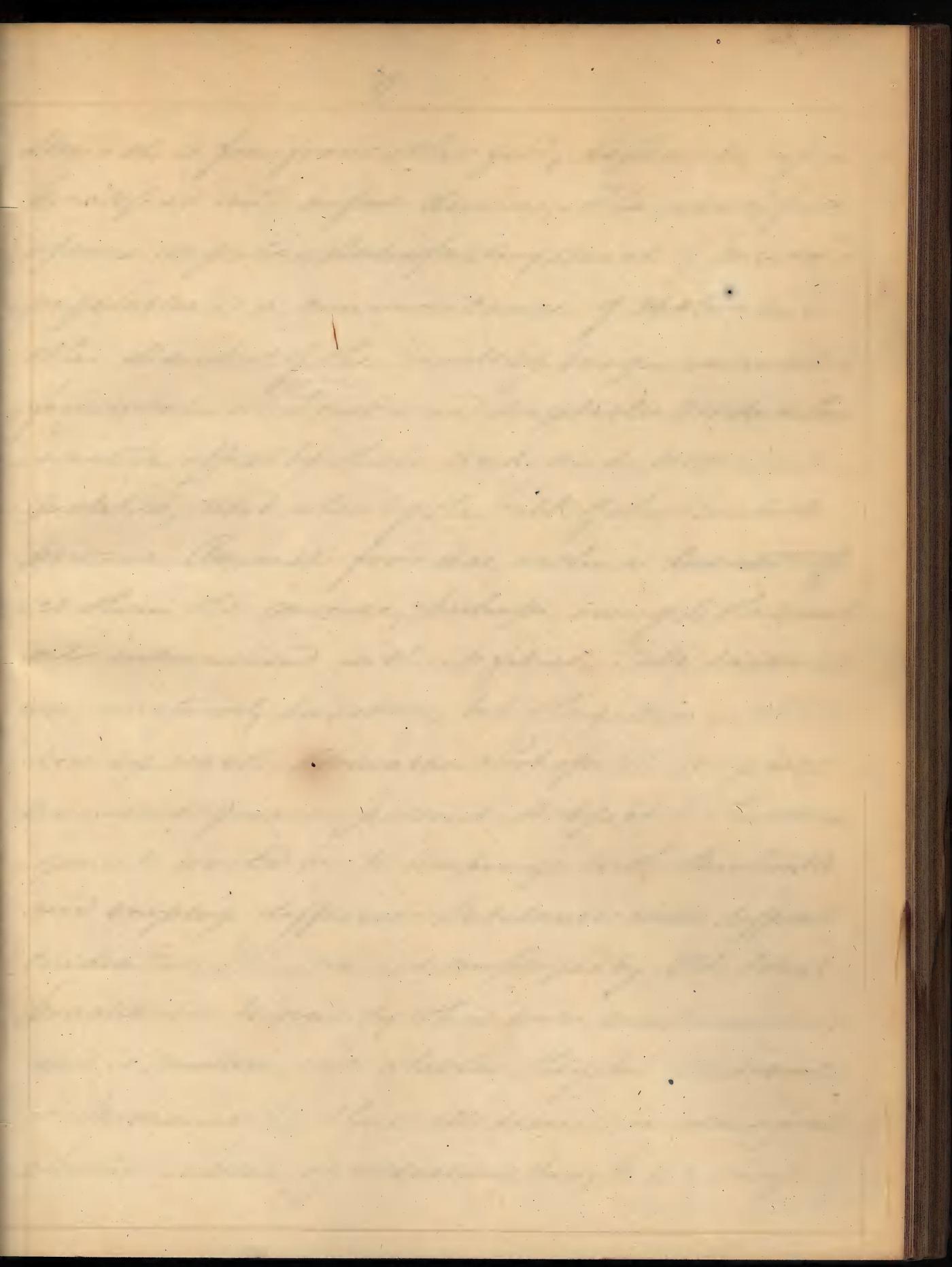


palatable and the most digestible. This grain is not used entire. It consists principally of two substances, the coverings, or part containing, and the flour or the part contained. In the early ages of the world, these were probably used together; but art has been directed to their separation, and has reduced the flour, as nearly as possible to a state of an impalpable powder. Persons that are constipated find a very happy effect from the use of bran bread, for, as it before remarked, flour, taken apart from its coverings, has a most constipating property; and it seems, that the external skin of the grain, that is thrown away, contains very important properties; and, instead of being in a great measure rejected, it should be preserved and ground up with the flour.

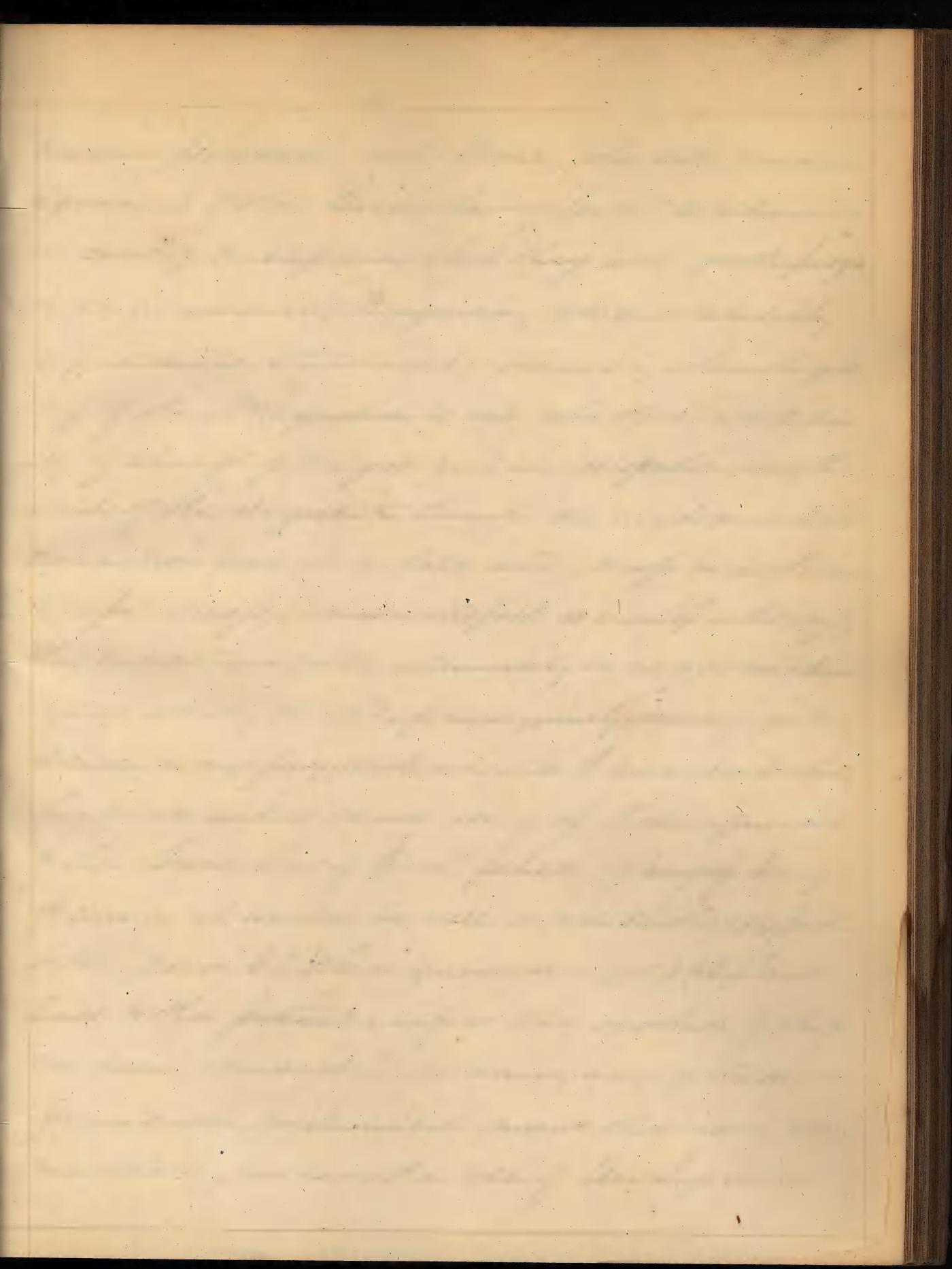
Mr. Miller reported to the Academy of Sciences that the bran of wheat possessed various valuable properties. Whether any of these have a purgative effect, is not known; but it has been



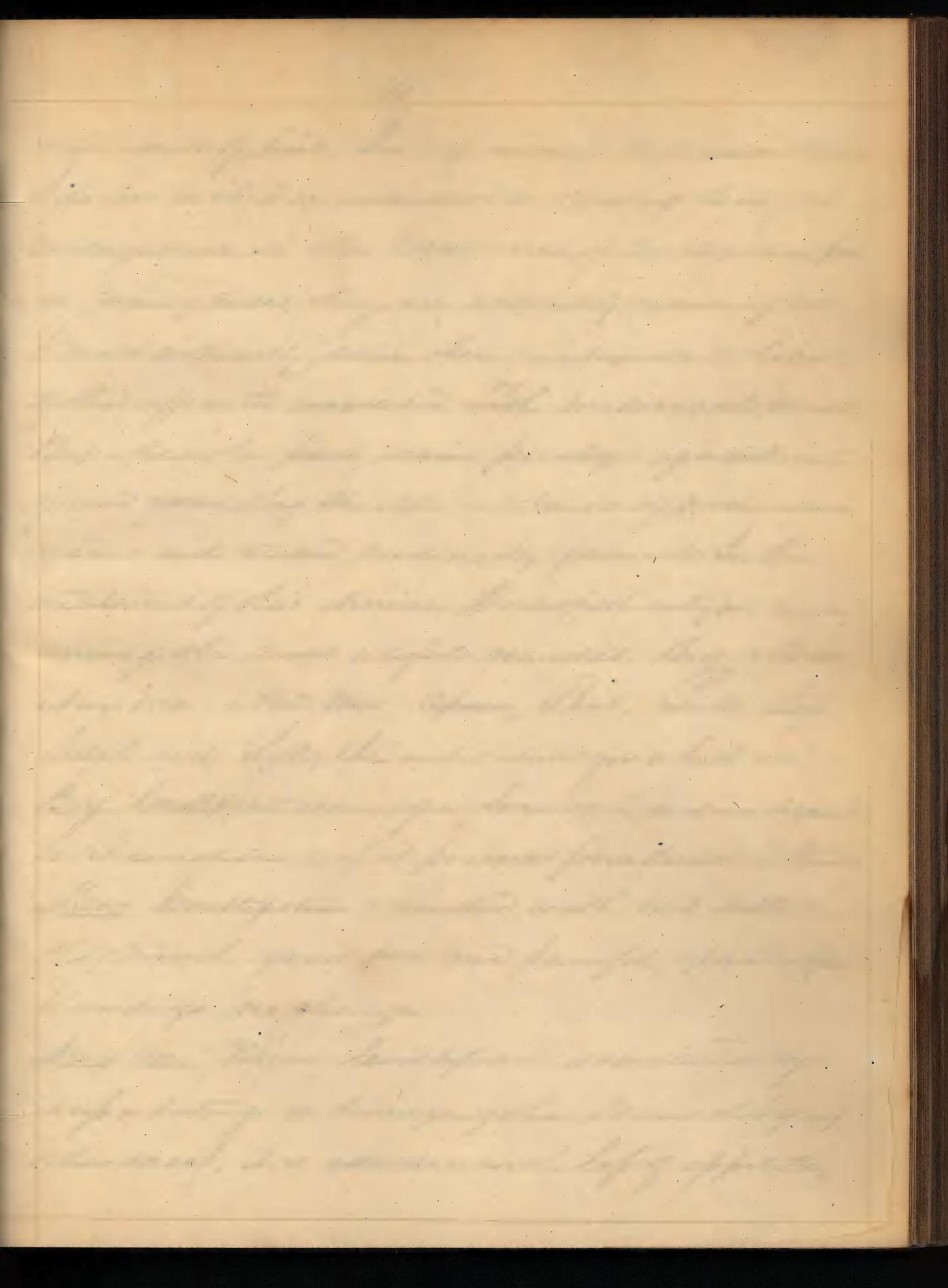
supposed, however, that the wheaten bran operates in two ways: first by the stimulus of the edges of its branry particles; second by mere bulk. It is supposed to operate in the first mode by the undissolved portions of bran acting on the Mucous coat of the intestines, exciting thereby the nervous energies of the parts, and producing contraction of the muscular fibres, secondly bulk is necessary to keep up the action of the bowels, as has been already shown in the allusion to the effect of highly nutritious substances, which, being in a great measure taken up by the Lactals, leave no mass of insoluble matter to fill the calibre and excite the action of the intestines. Fruit is found to be a very grateful and useful article of food to those who suffer from constipation, and fresh fruits are preferable to the dried, because ~~as~~ the dried fruit is more or less invested with the skin, which is with difficulty acted upon by the gastric fluids. Fruits whether fresh or dried when used to aid the bowels, should be taken when the



Stomach is free from other food, especially before breakfast and before dinner. The use of fruit after a regular satisfactory meal of meat and vegetables is a common cause of Cholera and other disorders of the bowels by bringing on a quick fermentation. Fruit and vegetables produce their laxative effect by their acid and saccharine qualities, and also by the bulk of their insoluble portions. Animal food has rather a laxative effect than the reverse, perhaps, owing to the animal oil intermixed with its fibres. Fatty substances are uniformly laxative, but they cannot be taken by weak stomachs. Perhaps the very best advice to give a patient subject to this derangement would be to temporize with their trouble and employ different substances under different conditions. The means employed by Old School Practitioners to remedy this evil, are numerous, and it matters not whether they be Medicinal or Mechanical, they all seem to be used ~~to~~ force Nature instead of assisting her, & is a very



common practice with those, who still remain ignorant of the "Great Law of Cure" to administer in cases of Constipation, what they term gentle purgatives, for instance, Magnesia, which is decidedly injudicious treatment, because, when the quality of the Magnesia is bad, and there is no certainty of always getting it good in Allopathic doses, the acids of the ~~digestive~~ Canal are inadequate with conversion into a salt, and, ~~most~~ being thrown up upon ~~most~~ (because allopaths do business in this way), the intestines will ultimately be clogged and sometimes wholly blocked up; consequently, rendering the disease a very formidable one. As I have said above, this treatment is made use of by those ignorant of the "Great Law of Cure", perhaps, by way of being facetious, it would be well to notice the exception to the proverb "Where ignorance is (not) bliss" at least to the patient. After the apothecary Shop has been ransacked in vain, among the most formidable mechanical means that have been resorted to, has been the use of Air Injections,



and Tents of lime. In reference to Mechanical means, I do not wish to be understood as damning them of no consequence in the treatment of Constipation, ~~but~~ in many cases, they are absolutely necessary, but I most certainly deem them inadequate to the cure of this affection ~~unassisted~~ <sup>by</sup> Medicinal means. But when the parts became paralyzed by a collection of hard faces, they should be relieved by mechanical means, and treated medicinally afterwards. In the treatment of this disease Homeopathically, we have among the most useful remedies. Bry. Mer. Nux Vom. Nat. Mur. Opun. Plat. Puls. Sep. Sulph and Gyc, the indications for which are: - Bry. Constipation occurring in summer, in persons subject to Rheumatism, or if it proceeds from disordered Stomach Mer. Constipation attended with bad taste in the mouth, gums sore and painful, appetite appears to undergo no change Nux Vom. Where Constipation is occasioned by overeating, or deranging the Stomach by any other except, it is attended with loss of appetite,

when the faces are hard and dry, and voided with great force, sometimes streaked with blood. Lycopodium is a remedy, the indication for which is where the Constipation is Chronic, and stands out as the only symptom; it is well adapted to persons of a bilious temperament, subject to attacks of difficult digestion, and general torpor of the abdominal organs, also for constipation arising from sedentary habits.

in a man of the above description.

Open the nose, you will find the nostrils if the nostril was closed, breathing, dryings of the nose, loss of appetite, impeding of blood to the head, headache accompanying the failing of hearing with chronic it has a heating sensation which agrees with the dryings of the mouth, seems to be a sense of demineralization between it and Measles.

Platina will be found useful, when, after passing through the part of the Plague, one is able only to bear only small bumps, with tenderness and scraping sensation on the part of the skin.

Nausea, and with distension of the abdomen, with pressure and heaviness; heat in the face; detumescence of blood to the head, with headache; disturbed sleep, depression, cardialgia, ill-humor; feeling as if the arms were closed, or contracted, with tenesmus. ~~This is indicated, not where the~~  
Saltum Muratinum is applicable in very obstinate cases, and where all other remedies fail, with no desire to go to stool; and when complete inaction of the Bowels has set in.

Opium like Rue Tom, has the sensation as if the arm was closed, cardialgia, dryness of the mouth; loss of appetite, congestion of blood to the head, headache accompanying the feeling of heaviness in the abdomen. It has a heating sensation, which, together with the dryness of the mouth, seems to be the line of demarcation between it and Rue Tom.

Platina will be found useful, where, after much straining on part of the Patient, he is able only to pass only small lumps, with tenesmus, and a scraping sensation at the anus after each evacuation;

complaining also of a chill, with a sensation of weak-  
ness in the abdomen, a constrictive pain in the abdomen,  
with pressure, pain in the Stomach, and ineffectual  
efforts a constipation.

Pulsatilla may be advantageously used in cases  
where Nux. Rom. is indicated, but where the patient  
is of a bland, phlegmatic disposition; or more  
particularly indicated for constipation pro-  
duced by derangement of the Stomach the result  
of eating too much fat.

Sepia is indicated in the case of females, or rheumatic  
individuals, also in cases where Nux. Rom., or Sulph.,  
are peculiarly indicated, but are not sufficient.

Sulphur is particularly useful in the generality of cases  
where the constipation is habitual, and is decidedly  
so, after N. Rom. to hypochondriacal and nervous  
individuals, and especially, if there be frequent  
but ineffectual desire to go to stool; with incarceration  
of flatulence, distension of the abdomen.

Alumina When the constipation seems to result  
from an apparent absence of peristaltic motion;